USAID's Bagh Activity

USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity
Annual Report 2015 / Year 2

Smithsonian Institution

USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity (Bagh)

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1 Acronyms

ACF	Assistant Conservator of Forests
AIG	Alternative Income Generation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCAS	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
BTAP	Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan
CCF	Chief Conservator of Forests
CF	Conservator of Forests
CMC	Co-Management Committees and Councils
CMO	Co-Management Organization
COP	Chief of Party
CREL	Climate Resilient Ecosystem and Livelihoods
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
EU	European Union
FD	Forest Department
FTRT	Forest Tiger Response Team
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GTI	Global Tiger Initiative
HTC	Human Tiger Conflict
ICT	Institutional Capacity and Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
MEP	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RFP	Request for Proposal
SAC	Special Awards Conditions
SEALS	Sundarbans Environmental and Livelihoods Security
SI	Smithsonian Institution
SAR	Staff Appraisal Report
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
TPP	Technical Project Performa
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VCF	Village Conservation Forum
VTRT	Village Tiger Response Team
WCS	World Conservation Center
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

2   Introduction

3   A summary of Bagh's progress in its second year, 2015

The Bagh Activity's Year 2 showed some significant progress in moving forward the Project's technical work, redeveloping its partnership strategy and sustainability plan for WildTeam, finalizing its M&E Plan, improving upon and formulating the livelihoods strategy from its original design, further deepening its relationship with the Forest Department and receiving a signed TPP for the Project from the Government of Bangladesh. Even with changes in senior management and key personnel, the Project did not lose momentum.

Staffing. Bagh Activity senior management redesigned the staffing chart per the needs of the Project and hired additional staff for what is now the Operations Team (administrative and finance support to all program work); hired a new Finance Specialist (key personnel on the Project); hired all required specialized staff the research team based on the research agenda, patrolling team, and the livelihoods strategy that was developed through technical assistance by Solimar, a partner through Smithsonian Institution.

Program Summary. Programmatically, the Project's technical strategy was revisited in collaboration with USAID at the start of 2015 based on the main Project objective and the Results Framework. A finalized research agenda under Component 1 was determined through the support of USAID and the Smithsonian, along with technical feedback by the WT CEO and WT UK. With the technical training and assistance of Panthera, a cost-share partner, Bagh inaugurated the first SMART patrolling training with the Bangladesh Forest Department for the protection of the West Sanctuary in early 2015. After several coordination meetings with the BFD, patrolling effectively kicked off in June, and continued throughout the remainder of the year. To make patrolling more effective and based on the Sundarbans context, Bagh and Panthera finalized the Patrolling Strategy and Implementation Plan with sustainability and long-term vision to the imminent threat of poaching in mind. Both of these activities are highly sensitive due to the nature of the data that is collected, and the project worked closely with the Bangladesh Forest Department to determine how the data would be collaboratively generated, collected and analyzed.

Component 3 provided support to the highly participatory and engaged VTRTs and FTRT, as well as the newly inaugurated Bagh Bondhus. These highly recognized members of the communities provided guidance, leadership and support to all activities implemented under Bagh throughout the twenty-two wards that dot the four ranges on the periphery of the Sundarbans. With the assistance of the ICT team, the component lead designed the VTRT sustainability workshop to determine the most appropriate course of action to ensure the

viability of the VTRTs as a vibrant, active and integral part of the communities in which they live.

The Communications Team finalized the Communications Strategy and the Branding and Marking Plan for the Project. It also designed and distributed thousands of local community outreach materials for the "Motherlike Sundarbans" campaign. The team also worked hand-in-hand with the Forest Department, both in Khulna and Dhaka, to support environmental days that are celebrated throughout the periphery and Dhaka city, particularly Global Tiger Day. In Quarter 4, the Communications Team finalized the Project's National Campaign Strategy.

The Alternative Livelihoods component evolved the most. Originally, it had a very limited scope of work based on the proposal write-up and the Cooperative Agreement. The team commenced focusing on private partnerships and creating high-value products with a conservation message through AIG, rather than the typical commodities. With a livelihoods consultant from Solimar, Bagh's livelihoods approach was developed and reviewed and approved at the Annual Work Plan Year 3 Partner Strategy Workshop, which took place in October 2015. Subsequently, the Project quickly hired all Livelihoods staff by Quarter 4.

Cross-cutting and Operations. To support the Project, senior management revisited the support provided by UNOPS, and requested changes in their annual work plan to conform to the priorities of the project and its Specific Conditions (formerly known as Special Award Conditions, or SACs). The Bagh M&E team actively engaged ACME in the development of the project's MEP and the definitions of its indicators. The Gender Specialist worked on the gender strategy for the project, as well as support WildTeam as an organization in the development of its sexual harassment policy and gender equity policy. As WildTeam is new to USAID and its implementation guidelines, the ICT team worked closely with USAID in understanding the training requirements and its online tool, TraiNET, and redeveloping the team's strategy to trainings throughout all five components. Overall, there were many positive changes in WildTeam's organizational structure and manner of doing business; while this had its growing pains and challenges, many important features and best practices have been put in place as a result, making the work more efficient and effective for all.

3.1   Project Implementation

3.2   Component 1 Expanded knowledge base

Component 1 aims to build and expand the knowledge base of the Sundarbans' mangrove ecosystem, with direct implications of linking research to management interventions by conducting priority research, and developing knowledge dissemination and skills development tools.

Led by Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Wildlife Technical Specialist (one of the key positions of Bagh Activity), the activities outlined in Component 1 picked up momentum in year 2015. Major activities initiated and/or accomplished in 2015 include:

1. Sundarbans Digital Library

A digital bibliography of all relevant literature of the Sundarbans' ecosystem was prepared in 2015. This bibliography contains 1,475 documents that were transferred to an open-source bibliography management tool known as 'Zotero'. This bibliography is searchable by title, key words, author's name, and category. USAID's Bagh Activity plans to transfer this library to an online platform to disseminate the information amongst various stakeholders for easy access and searchability.

2. Pilot Visit by SERC Team for Mangrove Ecology Research

A team of scientists from Smithsonian Environment Research Institute (SERC) and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute visited Bangladesh on 26 January -1 February 2015 and met relevant local academics, NGOs, and government organizations. They team also visited the Sundarbans to assess the feasibility of developing research plans for mangrove monitoring and habitat research. The team offered brief overviews of their research and held discussions with more than 50 people at more than 13 relevant organizations, including the USAID's Bagh Activity, WildTeam, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh Forest Department, USAID Bangladesh, Khulna University and the IUCN.

3. Updating Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan

The draft documents for revision of Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan (BTAP); namely 'Threat Assessment', 'Human-Tiger Conflict Mitigation Guidelines', 'Prioritization of Research Agenda' were prepared and are being reviewed by the STTA from WildTeam UK. These documents will be shared with the working group in Q2-2016 for their comments and later will be submitted to FD for endorsement.

5. Pilot Research Study planning

Three concept notes for pilot research study (prey monitoring, habitat monitoring, and DNA bar-coding pilot study) were prepared in consultation with experts from Bagh research team, Smithsonian, WildTeam Bangladesh, and WildTeam UK. Upon submission of the outputs to FD, permission was granted for these research activities during the PIC meeting in September 2015.

6. Designing Disease Monitoring Research in the Sundarbans

To support the Project in its disease monitoring research, Dr. John C. M. Lewis, Veterinary Director of the Wildlife Vets International (WVI), visited Bangladesh on 9th-16th June 2015 to discuss the study design and logistics for Tiger-Prey Disease Risk Assessment in the Sundarbans. He worked with the Wildlife Technical Specialist of USAID's Bagh Activity to discuss the scopes, scale and complexity of the disease surveillance activities, and sampling

design and analytical protocols for the pilot study that is planned to be conducted during the year.

7. Training Needs Assessment for GIS

A training need assessment for GIS was conducted by the Bagh research team for all Bagh staff in June 2015. The objective of the training was to assess the current mapping and GIS capacity of various components of Bagh and plan future trainings accordingly.

8. Boot Camp on Wildlife Study Design and Data Analysis

The research team under the USAID's Bagh Activity organized a series of capacity building workshops dedicated to wildlife research programs. This 'boot camp' on Wildlife Study Design and Data Analysis was the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Three internationally renowned trainers from Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sarawak (BCSS) and WCS Malaysia trained a total of 21 participants on 22 August -3 September 2015. The external participants were selected from a pool of 67 applicants through a rigorous selection process. Selected participants included 8 from the Bagh research team, 2 from Bangladesh Forest Department, 7 from different universities, NGOs and wildlife research groups, and 4 from Bhutan, India, Nepal.

9. Supporting FD in Setting Up a Wildlife Forensic Lab

The WTS has been advising (pro-bono) WCCU of the Forest Department to set up a forensic lab on the request of the PD of the SRCWP project. WTS reviewed WCCU's overall requirements of the lab and provided feedback on those requirements outlining the necessary equipment for the lab.

10. Participating in PIC and PSC meeting, International Congress for Conservation Biology

On 21 September 2015, the PIC (Project Implementation Committee) meeting was held at the Forest Department, chaired by the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) to discuss the research agenda and SMART patrolling in detail. The meeting helped find answers to critical questions related to SMART patrolling, as well as to put the SMART patrolling and the significance of camera trapping into context to understand the relationship and inter-dependency to achieve the goal of effective tiger conservation. Based on the meeting minutes, the team received approval for camera trapping, but required ministerial approval to clarify the role camera trapping has on the project (monitoring vs. assessing and censuring). Based on the outcome of meeting, the research team updated the software and prepared Panthera's 125 tiger camera traps for field deployment and worked closely with Panthera to develop the monitoring protocol while awaiting approval from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The team also attended the PSC (Project Steering Committee) meeting on 10 November 2015 at MoEF and presented a case for camera trapping in the West Sanctuary.

Dr. Sandeep Sharma participated in the 27th International Congress for Conservation Biology and the 4th European Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB-ECCB2015) held on 2-6 August 2015 at Montpellier in France where he co-authored two posters: "Human-tiger conflicts in the

Bangladesh Sundarbans: Patterns and processes" (Lead author from WildTeam) and "Beyond boundaries: Prioritizing habitats outside protected areas for conservation of large carnivores" (Lead author from TNC and Columbia University). Dr. Sharma was invited to make a presentation on 'Genetic variation, structure, and gene flow in a sloth bear meta-population in the Satpura-Maikal landscape of Central India'.

11. Trainings/Workshops

Training for Comp 1 staff on Camera trapping for monitoring tigers was organized with support from Dr. Rob Pickles and Craig Fullstone (Panthera) from 6-8 Nov 2015. The training focused on different aspects of study planning, camera trap deployment, camera trap data management.

The BCSS and WCS team facilitated a four-day workshop for the Bagh research team on 8-11 September 2015 on 'Modeling and Simulation in R' to help the team learn different aspects of simulating and modeling data for wildlife monitoring in order to design and plan the project's monitoring programs and tools in relation to Sundarbans ecosystem and landscape. Besides, a first-aid training was held for the research team in November 2015 with the help of two instructors from PACOM of the US Embassy in Dhaka to help the participants develop the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize and respond to any health and safety hazards during field activities in the Sundarbans.

On 17 December 2015, USAID's Bagh Activity organized a day-long training session on Wildlife Monitoring and Research in Khulna. A total of 37 participants, including 15 from Forest Department, 20 from WildTeam and 2 from Smithsonian Institution participated in the training.

12. Commencement of Field Research Activities in the Sundarbans

Led by USAID's Bagh Activity, three field research teams comprising a total of 110 people, including Bagh researchers, Bangladesh Forest Department staff, field assistants from local community, and boat crew embarked on a two-month extensive field research in the Sundarbans on 22 December 2015 to survey the entire Sundarbans to conduct various research activities, including tiger, prey, and habitat monitoring.

13. Supporting Cross-Cutting Issues and External Researchers

The Bagh research team extended support to other components of USAID's Bagh Activity and a number of external researchers during their visits to Bangladesh in 2015. The team held a meeting with WCS-Bangladesh to discuss the ways to incorporate wildlife monitoring-related data and protocols into the SMART Patrolling database and model, and pave the way for collaborative research on monitoring of aquatic mammals in the Sundarbans. The team extended support to Component 2 and Component 3 to develop the Tiger and Prey Poaching Monitoring Model and Human-Tiger conflict prediction model. The Bagh research team supported the M&E team for developing the 'knowledge assessment' questionnaire, and offered consultation for online platform for the M&E database. Mr. Suprio Chakma trained the

anti-poaching paroling team led by FD and Component 2 on field-craft (identifying animals from Sundarbans from their signs) in May 2015. The team provided research support to the Component 5 livelihood team through generating maps for identifying focused area for livelihood interventions. Component 1 supported Mr. Sam Leslie, a master's student of Kent University UK, during his visit to Bangladesh in May-June 2015 for Human-Tiger conflict research as part of his thesis. The Bagh Research team also extended support to M. A. Aziz, doctoral student at Kent University, UK, during his field research in selected parts of the Sundarbans.

3.3 Component 2 Reduced Illegal Wildlife Trafficking

The objective of Component 2 is to build the capacity of the GoB and civil society to respond to wildlife trafficking more effectively and engage regional and international bodies including the Bangladesh authorities into the global efforts to prevent wildlife trafficking.

In 2015, the second year of USAID's Bagh Activity, Component 2 focused on mobilizing patrolling initiatives such as SMART patrolling, community patrolling group formation, and continuation of the law enforcement monitoring mechanisms including wildlife crime monitoring, information collection, investigation, hotline operation and reporting, and enhanced regional collaboration. The progress and accomplishment under this component are elaborated as per the activities below:

1. Identifying the Gaps in Wildlife Crime Response and Creating Realistic Solutions
A Training Need Assessment (TNA) for Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) and Forest Department (FD) officials was completed in 2015. The TNA was expected to be completed in Q 1 as per the work plan. But it got delayed because initially the plan was to recruit a Government Liaison Officer to work with the ICT team to lead the TNA process. However, the process to hire a Consultant for the task begun in July, and finally the TNA was completed in November 2015. Mr. Antony J. Lynam, wildlife crime expert from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), was hired as the STTA to complete the TNA. During the TNA process, recommendations from ICCWC toolkit analysis were taken into consideration and a training matrix was developed for different levels of FD staff and WCCU. Subsequently, a field trip to Satkhira range and West Sanctuary of Sundarbans was arranged to get feedback from FD frontline staff and two workshops were organized in Khulna and Dhaka for mid-to-high level FD officials. Mr. Lynam submitted his final report, which is currently being reviewed by USAID Bangladesh.

2. Strengthening Frontline Law Enforcement – Government Level
The 'Wildlife Crime Law Enforcement Training Modules and Materials' could not be developed in 2015 as per the plan since it was dependent on the completion of the TNA. This activity was therefore shifted to the year 3 work plan.

3. Initiate and Conduct Training for FD and WCCU

This activity did not take place in 2015 as it was contingent on the completion of the TNA. This activity was therefore shifted to the year 3 work plan.

4. Strengthening Frontline Law Enforcement – Community Level

In 2015, Bagh has been consulting with FD and other stakeholders to develop a joint community patrolling mechanism by engaging the VTRTs, FTRTs and CMOs.
Bagh worked on Community Patrolling Group (CPG) formation with FD, CREL and CMC of the Satkhira range. Several meetings with Forest Department (FD) personnel, CREL and CMC were held in this regard. Finally five CPGs were formed in Satkhira range and a total of 10 VTRT members were included in those groups. Both CREL and FD jointly organized a program in September in Munshiganj to inaugurate the CPGs for the Satkhira range. These groups were provided with uniforms, shoes and other necessary logistics for patrolling and they started their activities in December 2015. The ATA work-stream drafted the CPG strategy in Q4 2015 and submitted it to the Project Director (PD) of USAID's Bagh Activity for review. The team is waiting for feedback from FD to initiate the next course of action.

A snapshot of SMART patrol training

5. Strengthening the Patrol Monitoring System in the Sundarbans

The Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) is a new and improved tool for measuring, evaluating and improving the effectiveness of wildlife law enforcement patrols and site-based conservation activities. In 2015, SMART patrolling was introduced across the West Sanctuary of Sundarbans for the first time to protect tigers. The initiative began by providing training to FD frontline staff on SMART patrolling and data management. The training was held from 23rd February to 5th March 2015 inside the West Sanctuary. A total 14 participants from FD attended the training. Bagh's cost-share partner Panthera provided technical support to the training. Representatives of USAID Bangladesh, PACCOM and the ICITAP also joined the training to ensure expected outcome from the training. The training covered topics on GPS use, navigation with map and compass, patrol formation, SMART data entry, first aid, crime scene management, boat search, person search, interviewing suspects, tactical communication, communication protocol, and the techniques to be adopted in case of encountering a tiger inside the Sundarbans. Two SMART patrol teams were formed and deployed in Sundarbans after the training.

6. Mobilizing Interim Patrolling in West Sanctuary and Satkhira range

SMART patrolling had been altogether a new concept to Bangladesh Forest Department. The piloting of SMART patrol started in June 2015. A total of 6 patrols, each consisting of 10 days,

SMART patrolling in West Sanctuary
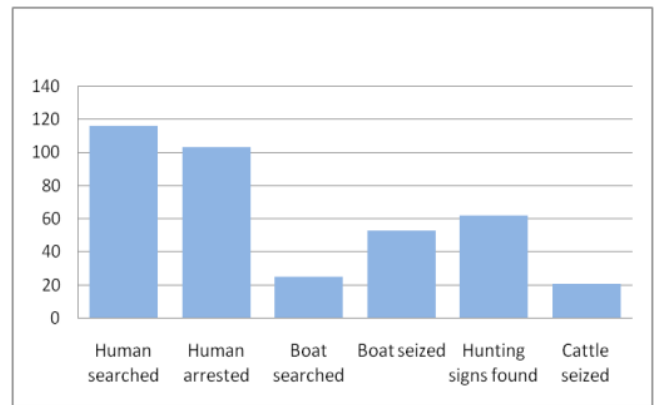
SMART patrol-based law enforcement

were conducted in Jun-Sept 2015. Three patrol assessment meetings were held in Munshiganj, Khulna and Dhaka to review the patrolling activities in the first 3 months. The initial success of the patrolling inspired the authorities to continue this initiative. The next patrolling phase rolled out and sustained from October to December 2015. The SMART patrolling team didn't only cover the West Sanctuary to prevent wildlife crimes, but also monitored the security of biodiversity and animal species in the area. In 205, two patrol teams conducted a total of 12 patrols and travelled almost 8,719 kilometer, covering an area of 67,368 hectares (both inside and outside of the sanctuary) during 1,140 hours of patrolling. The SMART patrolling teams carried out certain law enforcement activities during their patrolling. They arrested 103 suspected criminals and conducted body searches on 110 people. The SMART patrolling teams seized around 47 illegal boats, 21 cattle and foiled a number of poaching attempts inside the Sundarbans.

Patrol route in West Sanctuary and Satkhira range

During the wildlife monitoring, the SMART patrol teams identified 64 direct and indirect presence signs of wild animals in West Sanctuary of Sundarbans.

7. Coordination with Similar Initiatives

The Component 2 of USAID's Bagh Activity held several meetings with WCS Bangladesh in 2015 to discuss collaboration in the area of SMART patrol and data management. Representatives of WCS acted as trainers in SMART patrolling training to conduct session on GPS use. SMART Database Management training was arranged for FD staff in November 2015.
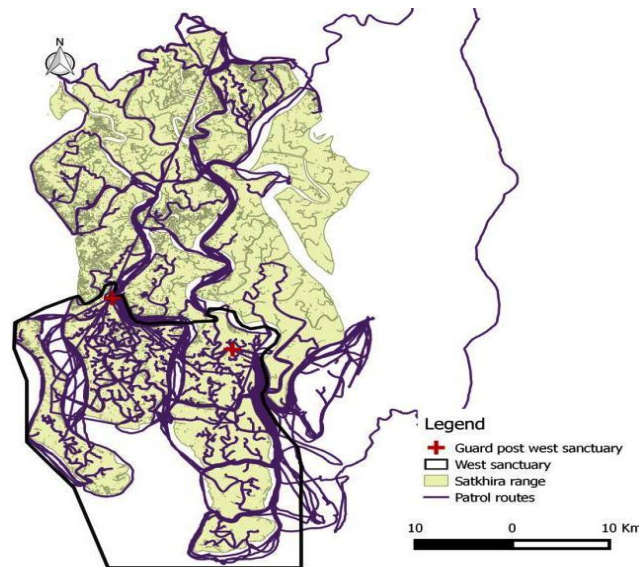
8. Developing National Enforcement Response Against Wildlife Crimes

Component 2 has been working with local community to identify the obstacles to tiger conservation efforts and utilize local suggestions and ideas for effective law enforcement and patrol planning in West Sanctuary and Satkhira range. The Bagh team makes regular monthly field visits to Satkhira range and initiates need-basis trips to other Sundarbans ranges. In 2015, the team made a total of 13 field trips to Satkhira, Khulna and Sarankhola range and made exploratory suggestions to the communities to prevent animal hunting. All those information/suggestions have been incorporated into the patrolling plan and guided the law enforcement activities of FD in the Sundarbans, especially in the Satkhira range. In 2015, more than 56 suggestions have been shared with external law enforcing agencies and FD to reduce threats to tigers.

Media and other open sources are among the key sources of information on the current trend in wildlife crimes and other illegal activities in Sundarbans. In 2015, the Bagh Team recorded a total of 40 wildlife seizure cases. 12 of the cases were related to tigers, and rest to other wild animals.

9. 24/7 Tiger Hotline

Tiger hotline is a way of getting information from local community to operate the strategic and enforcement work with incorporation of other open source information. This hotline number was publicized in the bordering areas of the Sundarbans so that local people can call here to share any information related to tiger and the Sundarbans. This hotline-borne information is being collected, collated and inserted into hotline database every month. In 2015, a total of 187 phone calls were received by the Tiger Hotline. Of the calls, the Bagh Team facilitated response to almost 71 calls by involving the FD and supplying information to relevant law enforcement agencies about suspected wildlife crimes. A Tiger Hotline reporting template has been developed and the report for December 2015 has been prepared.

10. Developing Wildlife Crime Intel Management Strategy for WCCU

To ensure proper collection and analysis of wildlife crime information, it is important to have a strategy for information management. An intel management strategy for Bagh project was drafted in Q4 in 2015 which was shared with Panthera for review.

11. Building Regional Collaboration and Capacity

Collaboration and partnership building is key to develop skills, learn best practices and share experiences. Component 2 of USAID's Bagh Activity attended several national and regional level meetings in 2015. In February 2015, two members from Bagh---Mr. Iqbal Hussain and Capt. Abul Kausher Palash (ret.) attended the Zero Poaching Symposium in Nepal. Two representatives of USAID's Bagh Activity---Mr. Nasir Uddin, Mr. Sandeep Sharma teamed up with Mr. Tariqul Islam, Assistant Chief Conservator of Forests, to attend the International Congress for Conservation of Biology' (ICCB-ECCB2015) in Montpellier, France in August 2015. They made a presentation on "Human Tiger Conflict in Bangladesh Sundarbans: Understanding patterns and process" at the conference. In October 2015, Mr. Nasir Uddin attended training on 'Spatial Crime Analysis' in Netherlands, organized by Panthera for their partners in different tiger range countries. The training brought together conservationists from South Asian region that now run a platform where people share information about conservation initiatives. In August 2015, the Bagh team met with an INTERPOL delegation in Dhaka to discuss future collaborations to fight wildlife crimes. INTERPOL also organized training on 'Intelligence Analysis' where the Law Enforcement Monitoring unit attended.

Selected Bagh staff also participated in a multi-agency coordination symposium titled 'Combating Wildlife Trafficking in Bangladesh: Protecting and Preserving Our Tigers' at Police Staff College in Dhaka. Organized by DoJ, USAID and other US agencies, the symposium discussed the ways for different law enforcement agencies to work together to combat wildlife poaching. Formation of a working group was a significant outcome of the symposium.

12. Cross site visit to Nepal/India

An exposure visit to Nepal was scheduled for May 2015 for both Bagh project and Forest Department officials, but the visit was postponed due to the devastating earthquake in Nepal. The visit might take place in Q2 2016. The objective of this visit is to enhance the knowledge of GOB officials in the area of SMART patrolling, government regulatory framework, community engagement, and multi-agency coordination to enable them develop a better management plan for Sundarbans focusing on the trafficking issues.

3.4   Component 3 Minimized human-wildlife conflict

The objective of this component is to prevent human-wildlife conflict, reduce fatalities and the number of new tiger widows, and to provide relief to victims. USAID's Bagh Activity puts the community at the heart of tiger protection by staffing the teams with villagers and by facilitating community-born solution development in partnership with FD and CMOs in order to ensure locally-owned solutions for the best chance of success and sustainability. Bagh was also working with CREL to facilitate a partnership with CMCs to establish a linkage between VTRTs and FTRTs. Component 3 activities in 2015 mainly focused on:

1. VTRT Experience and Status Survey

A comprehensive survey to assess the current status of VTRTs on knowledge, performance, motivation, capacity and their social acceptance to the community was completed in 2015. A total of 294 VTRT members and 400 community people were interviewed using structured questionnaire. The survey was conducted in 34 locations of Chandpai, Khulna, Sarankhola and Satkhira ranges. Data analysis has been completed and the report has been finalized.

2. VTRT Reformation

Reformation is a regular process of VTRT management. Data collection was completed in November 2015 and the report was finalized in December 2015. In 2015, 13 VTRT members were excluded and 8 new members were included into the revised VTRT database.

3. Assessing the Needs to VTRT Expansion to other areas

VTRT's spatial distribution information has been reviewed, and GIS mapping has been completed. For assessing the expansion needs, the data collection method included

consultative dialogue and one-to-one interview with staff who deal with VTRTs and VTRT members. Based on the data, a report was prepared outlining the needs of VTRT expansion to other areas.

4. VTRT Management (Including VTRT Refresher Training)
A total of 493 VTRT team meetings, 69 VTRT leaders meetings, and 5 refresher trainings were held in 2015. A total of 278 VTRT members attended the refresher trainings. Prior to the refresher trainings, a ToT training for communication action staff was conducted. VTRT annual meetings were conducted in Chandpai, Khulna, Sarankhola and Satkhira range.

5. Developing HTC Management Guideline
The final draft was prepared with the UK STTA. It has been sent to the Research Team (Component 1) on 28 July 2015 to get the approval from FD along with other relevant guidelines. The Bagh Research Team will get those necessary guidelines endorsed by FD as per Bagh's AWP 2016.

6. Consultation with CREL Project to Identify the Scopes of Developing Linkage between CMCS and VTRTS
A total of four coordination meetings were held with CREL at Khulna regional level to develop a linkage between Co-Management Committees (CMCs) and VTRTs. The VTRT list has been sent to CREL for their inclusion as VCF members. The issue of VTRT engagement with CMCs has been discussed in CMC monthly meeting in Satkhira range. VTRT members have been included in CPGs accordingly.

7. HTC Data Collection and Analysis
Human Tiger Conflict data has been collected in standardized data sheet. Data has been collated, analyzed and maintained in excel spreadsheet. Two six monthly reports (Jan-Jun and Jul-Dec) have been produced based on the data.

8. Identifying the Need and Scope of a Conflict Prediction Model
The needs and scopes of a conflict prediction model were identified through a consultation meeting with the Research Team in April 2015.

9. Safety Training for Sundarbans Resource Collectors
A total of six safety trainings were organized in Chandpai, Khulna, Sarankhola and Satkhira range in 2015. A total of 511 forest resource users (honey collectors and fishermen) were trained on forest-working safety measures, sustainable use of forest resources, wildlife act, compensation policy and basic first aid. The team prepared a report on the outcome of the trainings.

10. Assess the Need of FTRT for Other Ranges and Expand FTRT to one Additional Range
A consultation workshop was held in November 2015 in Khulna and an assessment of the current FTRT engagement was made. The team came up with recommendations for FTRT expansion based on the assessment.

11. Improve FTRT Management and Services
FTRT received a series of trainings in 2015 on community patrolling, community meeting, first aid and other related issues. A detailed action plan regarding FTRT services was drafted.

12. Identify the Scopes of Improving the Compensation Policy and Practices
Focus group discussion, one-to-one interviews and case studies were carried out with tiger victims, VTRTs, Bagh staff who manage conflict situation and some FD staff to gather information to improve the current compensation policy practice. The data has been analyzed and a set of recommendations has been prepared.

13. Reconnect Tiger Widows with Their Communities
In 2015, the Bagh Team identified the tiger widows in Khulna and Satkhira range. Tiger widows were engaged through regular village forums where they discussed about the common conservation issues with other community members. A tiger widow list has been prepared for Khulna and Satkhira range. The list was handover to component 5 and consultation with component 5 was held to include the tiger widows in the livelihood beneficiary pool.

3.5 Component 4 Enhanced communications, outreach, and gender engagement

Under this component, Bagh has been operating its communication interventions and addressing tiger-human conflicts and human threat to biodiversity by implementing communication, outreach, partnerships, youth and gender engagement activities that have been contributing to behavioral change of the local and national level communities and other stakeholders. In the second year, Bagh has focused, among other activities, on organizing the phase two of the Commitment Campaign, styled as the "Mother-like Sundarbans" by reconnecting various categories of audiences with the Sundarbans ecosystems and landscapes to inspire them to play their roles for conserving Sundarbans biodiversity and tigers for the present and future generations. Recognizing that the threats to the Sundarbans and tigers are directly linked to human behavior, the main objective of the Bagh's Communications and outreach strategy has been to gather public commitment for saving tigers and the Sundarbans. The following activities were carried out throughout 2015 under this component:

1. Commitment Campaign (phase two): Positive Behavior Change at Community Level
The objective of commitment campaign is to promote social disapproval for deer poaching and deer meat consumption, make women aware to encourage men to save stray tigers, make women committed to save tigers and the Sundarbans, and to promote Sundarbans-related laws and policies. A total of 132 events were organized in 22 wards adjacent to Sundarbans. Around 13,000 men and women were engaged through these events. Besides, 18 brand ambassador announcement ceremonies were held in Chandpai, Khulna, Sarankhola and Satkhira range in November 2015 followed by an inauguration ceremony for the commitment campaign. 60 Baghbondhus (tiger ambassadors) were introduced to the community through

these events. Around 15,000 local people were engaged across the four ranges of Sundarbans through these interventions.
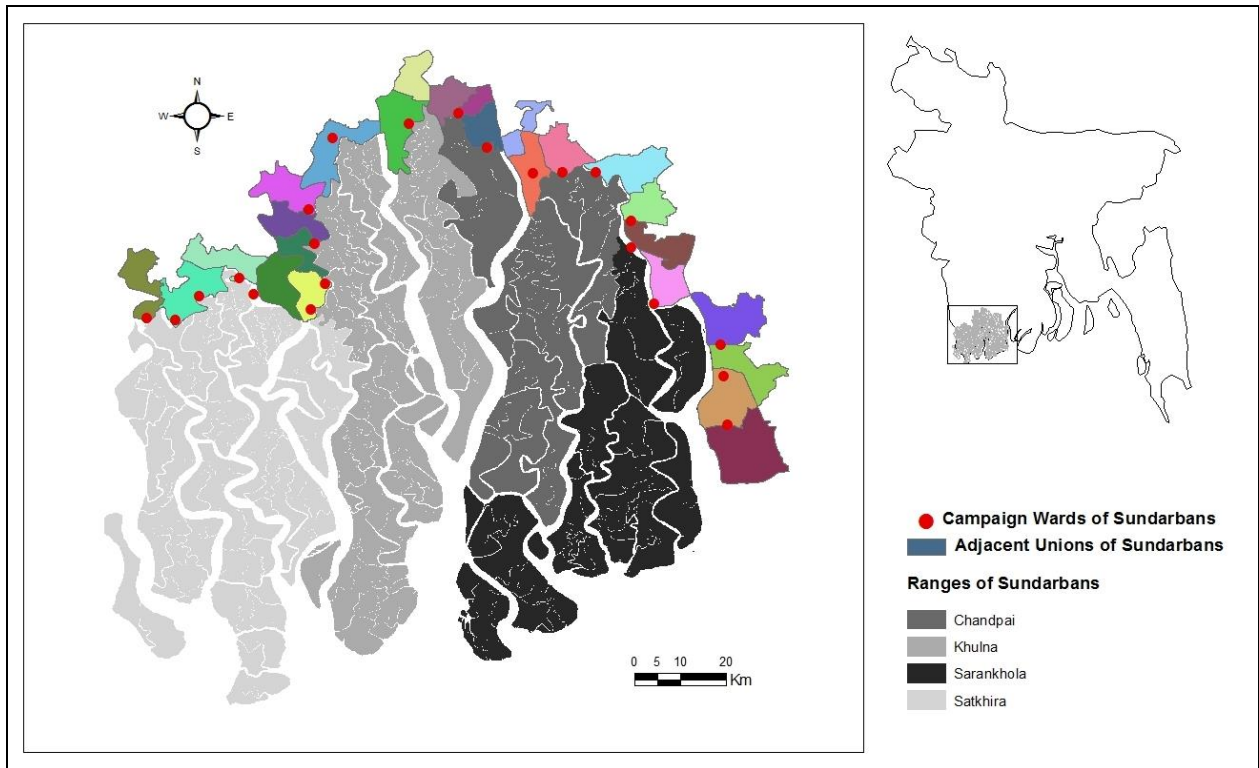
Selected areas for commitment campaign

2. Pilot Community Conversation/Open Dialogue

Baghbondhus are volunteers from the adjacent villages of Sundarbans, working for wildlife conservation through raising awareness among the local community people and act as public motivators from their own platform. Baghbondhus include school teachers, religious leaders, political leaders, journalists, and even housewives. Through the village forum, these people are continuing to motivate the local community people to support wildlife conservation activities. In 2015, a total of 293 village forums were organized by the Baghbondhus and through those sessions, they engaged around 7,373 local villagers including 3,133 men, 4,121 women, 88 boys and 31 girls. Bagh will continue its village forum activities in 2016 and 2017.

Baghbondhu orientation sessions on the commitment campaign were conducted in four ranges where the concept of commitment campaign was discussed with the Baghbondhus and their roles in commitment campaign were identified and described.

3. Participate in Different Day Observances

Throughout the year, the Bagh communication team supported and participated in a wide range of events, workshop and observance of different occasions/days related to tiger and biodiversity conservation.

The Sundarban Day was observed in four Sundarbans ranges and Khulna city on 14th February 2015. Bagh staff participated in all the events. In Khulna city, Forest Department and Sundarban Academy organized the Sundarban Day program with the support of WildTeam, Rupantar, Concern Worldwide, Relief International, CREL and Khulna Press Club. A discussion session, art competition and speech competition on the Sundarbans issues, were organized for school children in Khulna city. In the range level, with the support from the Forest Department, WildTeam organized the programs. Essay competition on the Sundarbans topics was held among the school children and a friendship football match was organized between VTRTs and the villagers.

Bagh participated in World Wildlife Day celebration on 3 March 2015 in Dhaka. A seminar and fair was organized by the FD in the Osmani Auditorium. Bagh actively participated in the fair and installed a stall with Sundarbans theme. Bagh showcased Bagh Promo, USAID Biodiversity film, and other audio-visual and published materials in the stall. Bagh brochures and World Wildlife Day caps were distributed to the visitors. The Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Environment & Forests paid his visit to the Bagh stall. Bagh team participated in the awareness week for tiger endangerment organized by Global Issues Network (GIN) club of the American International School, Dhaka (AISD) on 12 April 2015. The Bagh Communication Team participated and supported in USAID's meetings and trainings for the media and Journalists' engagement in biodiversity conservation in Bangladesh.

The team attended a daylong training and award-giving ceremony participated by brand leaders titled 'Commaward 2015' organized by Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) on 29 August 2015 at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon as part of capacity development for the Bagh Communication and Partnership staff.

The team arranged a Workshop on Engaging Brands and Companies in Tiger Conservation in Bangladesh on October 16 & 17 at Hotel Lake Shore in Dhaka and facilitated a USAID's team's field visit to Khulna and Chandpai on November 15-18.

4. Update the Bagh Communication Strategy and Branding and Marking Plan
Bagh Communication Strategy and Branding and Marking Plan has been updated with the comments from USAID which outlines how Bagh will address the challenges facing all the five components and contribute to achieving the overall activity goal through outreach, behavioral change campaigns, social engagement and communications. Bagh also developed and updated the Branding & Marking templates which have been included in the strategy for future reference.

5. Prepare for the Launching of National Tiger Awareness Campaign and TigerCaravan

The team has planned and finalized the vendors and all necessary communications materials for a successful launching of the National Tiger Awareness Campaign aimed at raising mass awareness across the country about conservation of tigers and the Sundarbans. The campaign will also inspire the countrymen and engage the stakeholders against wildlife crimes that affect the conservation of the tiger, the Sundarbans and its biodiversity. As part of the preparation of the National Campaign, the Communication Team designed the concepts and planned a "TigerCaravan" which will travel across the country for raising national awareness about conservation of tigers and the Sundarbans. The TigerCaravan will boast mobile exhibition facilities, street theater group and social media mobilization tools to implement its mandates. The Team has published the RFP for design, management and activation services for Tiger Caravan with Mobile Film Unit (MFU), Street Theater Troup (STT) and Social Media Mobilization to select the most potential vendor to run the two-year campaign.

For the launching of the National Campaign, the team has the prepared guests list and letters to The Chief guest, Guests of Honor for attending the National Campaign Launching. A slogan has already been developed for the Campaign, which is: "Tiger is our pride – We shall protect the tiger."

6. Branding, Outdoor and Audio-Visual Materials
In 2015, the Communication Team prepared a Bangla version of Bagh Activity Brief, Bangla version of the Bagh Promo and provided the final feedback to the vendor for the English version of the promo. A Video shooting was completed for filming of drama for the commitment campaign. The name of the drama is "Amrai Bachabo Sundarban" (We will save the Sundarbans). The shooting started on 2nd April and was finished in 8th April 2015. The vendor has finalized the drama after necessary feedback and suggestions from the Communication Team. The final product has been submitted to USAID for final approval. The team led the production 4 billboards, 230 signboards, 100 mini signboards, 100 wall paintings along with 20,000 posters, 20,000 danglers, 1,480 key rings, 10,000 Stickers, 300 jute bags for men, 650 ladies purse, 1,500 T-shirts and 650 Puzzle box for children and other materials for campaign at local level.

7. Engagement through Dissemination of Information
From March 24, 2015, the Communication Team has initiated to disseminate its major highlights to the strategic audience and therefore a weekly online bulletin titled 'TigerTuesday' has been produced on every Tuesday with the highlights of the previous week and being circulated among the key stakeholders and partners. The bulletin was also be uploaded on WildTeam's website to increase its subscribers. 'TigerTuesday' subscriber database will be broadened over time and government officials along with other stakeholders will also receive the bulletin on a regular basis. A total of 41 issues of the weekly bulletin were published in 2015.

8. Work Plans and Budget
The team prepared the component budget and the annual work plan for year 3 (2016). The AWP Y3, component 4 budget, was updated and submitted.

9. *Support to Other Components*
The communication team has prepared, designed, produced, and revised different IEC/BCC and outdoor materials in English & Bangla for different workshops, training and events to disseminate the core messages of the project. Besides, the team has also provided branding, design and other supports for other components of the project through the year 2015. To support the Component 3 Minimized human-wildlife conflict, the Communication Team led the process selecting a total of 26 profiles of selected Baghbondhus to organize workshops and use them in different branding and outdoor materials to engage the local communities more effectively. The Team led the process to design and production of the outdoor materials for Commitment Phase of the Mother-like Sundarbans campaign to encourage people make commitments to save the tiger and the Sundarbans.

3.4.1 Build capacity of civil society and NGOs for awareness-building on PPPs
Bagh recognizes the potential that better coordination and collaboration between public and private sector can ensure a better future for the tigers of Bangladesh, as well as raise awareness of the current work and dedication going toward the plight of the Bangladesh tigers. In the restructuring of the organization chart for the project during Quarter 2, Bagh decided to have a point person for all partnership building for the program and WildTeam as an organization in the remaining two and a half years. This position will focus on determining how best to engage the private sector, as well as ensures the project reaches its target in cost-share obligation. The organizational chart was put into effect at the end of Quarter 2, and during Quarter 3, Mr. Iqbal Hussain, Program and Partnership Management (PPM) Specialist, started formulating the approach to the private sector partnerships Bagh is hoping to create with results and impact during the project life cycle, and one that we can continue well beyond for WildTeam. The PPM Specialist will oversee all partnership arrangements for all activities of Bagh and any joint initiatives of WildTeam under Bagh. Each Component team will designate a focal point for the respective organizations with which they will receive training on how to manage the strategic partners.

1. Draft PPP Strategy
By Quarter 4 of Year 2, Bagh's PPM Specialist developed a draft PPP strategy for WildTeam, outlining the goals, objectives, guiding principles, and partnership scopes under USAID's Bagh Activity, partnership categories and partnership management and monitoring processes. Special focus was given to mainstreaming the PPP strategy and management system by connecting it with current Bagh activity, as well as ensuring it builds in-house capacity in the organization. A strong Contact Relation Management (CRM) system will be put in place to manage partners, with support from Salesforce[1]. Bagh's PPM Specialist has secured a non-profit start-up package of 10 user IDs from Salesforce free of cost (retail worth is $15,000 USD), in Quarter 4. The main focus of the partnership approach is to ensure sustainability so that these partnerships and relations last beyond the Bagh project time.

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[1]www.salesforce.com. MIT "50 Smartest Companies"; Forbes, "the World's Most Innovative Companies"

2. Explore New Partnership and Engage Brands to Support Conservation
In Quarter 4, Bagh explored for partnerships with the leading brands and companies in support of tiger conservation in Bangladesh. Bagh organized a day-long workshop with the brand and company leaders on 17 October 2015 at Hotel Lakeshore in Gulshan 2, Dhaka. The main objective of the workshop was to raise awareness among leading brands and significant stakeholders so that a joint initiative can be implemented. The objectives also include sharing the current scenario of wild tigers that are critically endangered as well as exploring opportunities for collaborative efforts to save the last remaining population of tigers in the Sundarbans. Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) and WildTeam jointly organized the workshop. Representatives attended the workshop from ACI, Aarong, Robi, WebAble Digital, Banglalink, SSG, Prothom Alo and others. A number of prominent journalists also participated in the workshop. In November 2015, Prof. Dr. Md. Anwarul Islam, Chief Executive of WildTeam, urged for private sector support for tiger conservation in Bangladesh at the
7th Best Brand Award. Ms. Kathy Wachala, the Acting Chief of Party and Mr. Iqbal Hussain the Program & Partnership Specialist for USAID's Bagh Activity were also invited at the event. The ceremony offered an opportunity to present an overview on Bagh Activity and call for partnership with the private sector for the noble cause of conserving the tiger and the Sundarbans.

3.4.2 Gender Engagement
This sub-component has been working to raise awareness on gender roles, and to incorporate gender mainstreaming best practices within USAID's Bagh Activity staff members, as well as among its beneficiaries to ensure sustainable and effective natural resource management and conservation activities under the Project. As per the TPP, the Bagh Gender Specialist leading this sub-component focused on formulating different activity guidelines and articulated gender fascinated policies in 2015. These policies will influence gender perception within the Bagh Activity's areas of work and its beneficiaries. Year 2 of USAID's Bagh Activity also offered some exciting opportunities to incorporate gender issues into our events, especially within the community-based activities under component 3 and component 5.

1. Adoption of Bagh Gender Approach
Bagh Gender Approach was approved in Q1 2015 and an orientation was held in Khulna at the beginning of the Q2 to train the field staff on gender issues. The daylong training enlightened the Bagh staff members on various gender perspectives and the use of "gender lens".

2. Bagh Gender Working Committee
The Gender Working Committee Guidelines was finalized and a Bagh Gender Working Committee was formed in Q2 2015. The 16-member Working Committee will regularly monitor, guide and document information pertaining to gender issues. Efforts will be made by the committee to establish an enabling environment where women feel comfortable to work and feel free to express themselves.

3. *Policy on Gender Equity for Bagh*

The Gender Policy for WildTeam was completed and approved. The guidelines will guide the WildTeam and USAID's Bagh Activity to integrate specific gender equity goals and objectives into all its programs, interventions, services and trainings.

4. Policy on Sexual Harassment
Similarly, the Sexual Harassment Policy was completed and approved. This Policy seeks to prevent sexual harassment, and to ensure a healthy working environment for every worker regardless of sexual orientation.

5. Gender Survey
A survey to identify gender roles in conservation and determine gender-baseline information of the Sundarbans surrounding villages to increase equal participation of women and men and reduce livelihood dependency on forest resources was completed in Q4 2015 led by BCAS. The primary goal of this assessment was to increase the equal participation of genders by changing gender-biased attitudes through reduced livelihood dependency on forest resources. Based on the findings of the survey, the Gender Team will finalize the approach for Bagh Conservation Village Forum structure, including women leadership involvement (with separate and/or integrated meetings with male, female and youth counterparts) and other need-based guidelines.

3.6 Component 5 Improved Livelihoods for Conservation

The goal of this component is to reduce dependency on natural resources and incentivize positive conservation actions in the SRF through alternative and supplementary income through eco-friendly conservation initiatives.

The Sundarbans has a great significance from the economic and ecological context of Bangladesh. Several million people depend directly or indirectly on the Sundarbans for their livelihoods. A focused livelihood strategy for this dependent population is a must to meet their subsistence requirements as well as reduce poaching of tiger and her preys in the SRF. In this frontier, Bagh has been working with selected beneficiaries for their livelihoods development and in turn involved them with existing conservation efforts. In Year 2 of the Project, activities under this component focused, among other activities, on assessing the existing AIG activities and create a dedicated Livelihoods Plan for Bagh project, making a desktop review of existing AIG activities in the Sundarbans periphery and understanding the opportunities for flourishing eco-tourism in Sundarbans.

The AWP 2015 for Component 5 also included generating innovative AIG ideas and approaches through Bagh and creating an ecotourism master plan for the Sundarbans.
The Forest Department has been implementing the 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection (SRCWP)' funded by the World Bank. Besides, the 'Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihood (CREL)' carried out a study on the capacity issues of the SRF. An expert to USAID submitted the report. Taking these contexts into consideration, Bagh didn't

work on ecotourism issues in 2015. As it was included in the TPP, Bagh already put an activity in the AWP 2016 on eco-tourism and SRF strategy. Besides, Bagh decided not to implement the 'AIG National Competition and Implementation of Winning Ideas', but explored the existing livelihood ideas and high-quality products that could be branded with Tiger Conservation messages and add more value with a premium pricing.
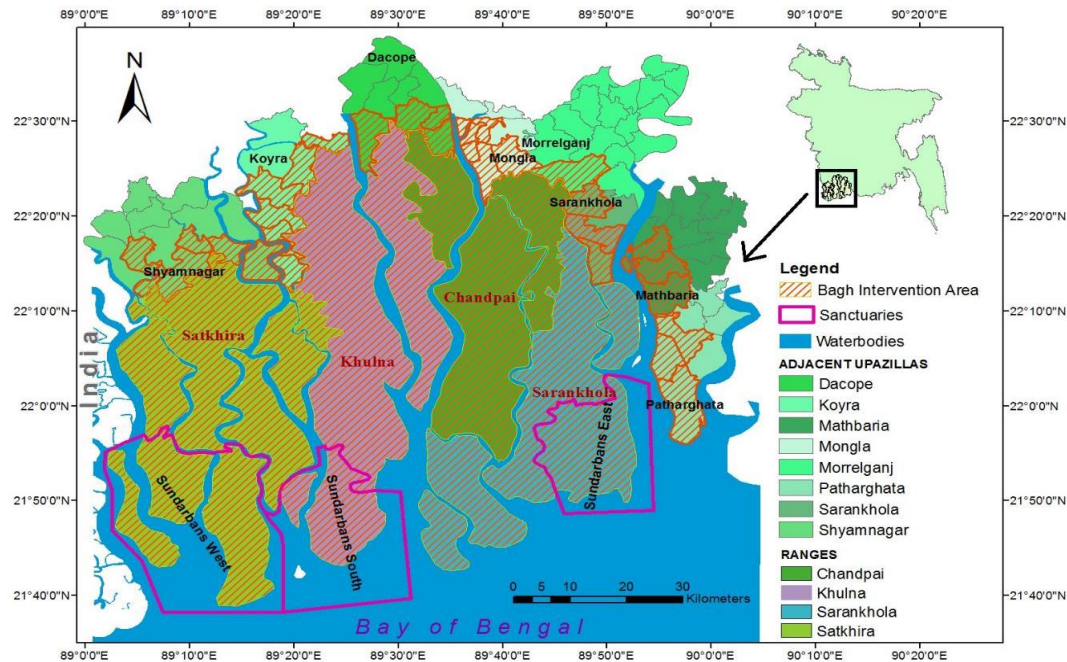
Bagh livelihoods intervention area

1. Desktop Review of Current AIG Activities in Sundarbans
The review focused on Alternative Income Generation activities in SRF region. Five projects were reviewed. The reviewed projects include the Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) supported by USAID, Sundarbans Environmental and Livelihood Security (SEALS) supported by EU, Sustainable Development and Biodiversity Conservation in Coastal Protection Forests (SDBC) supported by GiZ, Sundarbans Biodiversity Conservation Project (SBCP) supported by ADB, and 'Promotion of Local Cultural Ecotourism in Sundarbans' supported by GEF and RI's. A comprehensive report was prepared and submitted. The weaknesses, strength and the potentials of the livelihood activities under different ongoing and previous projects have been identified in the report. The Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) for Sundarbans and Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan (BTAP) were also reviewed.

2. Orientation on Livelihood Options
An orientation on conceptual knowledge and different aspects of livelihoods was conducted (7-10 June, 2015) in Khulna. Staff members from Khulna regional and field offices were present

in the orientation. The First session (9th June) covered the definitions of livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods process and sustainable livelihoods framework. The 2nd session on same day held a SWOT analysis on livelihoods to identify the potential livelihoods option for AIGA under Bagh livelihood approach.

3. FGDs to Identify Potential AIGA Options for Bagh Livelihood Approach
Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in 4 ranges of SRF region. Two FGDs were held in Chandpai and Sharankhola range on 12-13 July 2015. Another two FGDs were conducted with participation of Mr. Simon Jones, STTA Livelihood Consultant from Solimar International, on 11-12 August 2015 in Khulna range and Satkhira range. The objective of the FGDs was to identify potential livelihoods options for AIGA under Bagh livelihood approach and to collect information and ideas from the target beneficiaries.

During the FGDs, the participants identified a number of livelihood options including honey with bee hives, handicrafts, tourism, tailoring, small-scale poultry or duck rearing for women, need-based vocational training on different trade for youths, farming, pond fish culture, crab fattening, salt tolerant paddy cultivation, vegetable cultivation, building marketing linkages with potential market players and to work with CREL supported by LSP.

FGD at Khulna Range to identify potential AIGA options for Bagh Livelihood Approach

4. Discussions and Debrief Meetings
A meeting was held on potential livelihood intervention for AIGA with senior Forest Department officials on 10 August 2015 in Khulna. The Conservator of Forests of Khulna Circle, all Divisional Forest Officers based in Khulna, the PD and DCoP of USAID's Bagh Activity and the STTA Consultant were present at the meeting. The objective of the discussion was to share

views and ideas on livelihood interventions in SRF region and to involve the senior FD official from Khulna into the development process of Bagh livelihoods Approach.

A discussion meeting was held on 19 August 20015 at Bagh office in Dhaka on the draft Bagh Livelihood Approach. All the component leads and relevant staff members of the Project attended the meeting. Mr. Simon Jones, STTA Livelihood Consultant, presented the Draft Bagh Livelihood Approach at the meeting. The component leads and staff members gave some valuable suggestions on the draft Livelihood Approach at the meeting.

A debrief meeting on the draft Bagh Livelihood Approach was held on 20 August 2015 at Bagh office where Mr. Simon Jones presented the Draft Livelihood Approach to Mr. Colin Holmes from USAID, WildTeam CEO Dr. Anwarul Islam, BCAS Executive Director Dr. Atiq Rahman, and Bagh SMT members. The participants gave their feedback on the draft Livelihoods Approach. Mr. Simon Jones from Solimar International supported the livelihood team and joined the team twice in 2015---during the livelihood planning in August 2015 and the development of Bagh Beneficiary Pool and draft AWP 2016 for component 5 in November 2015.

5. Bagh Livelihood Planning
Based on the desk review, interviews and workshops with stakeholders, target beneficiary analysis and livelihood analysis, the Livelihood Team developed the 'Bagh Livelihood Approach' and a work plan through which Bagh will implement its livelihood activities with a focus on high-quality, market driven products. A work plan was also developed to guide the implementation. The Livelihood Approach consists of the following elements:

a. Livelihoods Strategy
    The following strategies were considered to ensure a long-term relationship between beneficiaries and the supply chain, which will be sustainable in the long run even after the project ends:
    - No philanthropy or subsidy
    - High-quality and market driven products
    - Private sector engagement

b. Bagh Livelihoods options
    USAID's Bagh activity targets high-quality and market driven products (non-commodity based) which can add more value and have decided the followings as AIG for the dependent communities:
    - Crafts
    - Honey (apiculture) and
    - Tourism

c. Geographical Coverage

People from 5 districts comprising 17 Upazillas and 210 villages are dependent directly or indirectly on the SRF resources. Bagh livelihood AIGA will be focused on the 22 wards bordering the SRF in which the BAGH project has completed the 'Mother-Like Sundarbans' awareness campaigns and 'Mother-like Sundarbans' commitment campaigns has also been implementing in the same area. This was further segmented into a total of 43 villages located within these wards. The reason for narrowing the geographic scope to these areas is to leverage the work already done by BAGH to raise awareness about tiger conservation through the 'Motherlike Sundarbans' campaign.

d. Livelihoods Partners
The business partners will be involved in products development and marketing through their established outlets as initial conversation was done with the followings:

- Hathay Bunano ps (Crafts)
- Aarong (Honey)
- The Dhaka Handicrafts (Crafts)
- Jatra (Crafts)
- The Guide Tours Limited (Tourism)
- Pug Mark Tourism Limited (Tourism)

e. Bagh Livelihoods Beneficiary
The beneficiary will be selected by the partners based on the capability as well as skills from the followings from a listed beneficiary pool prepared by livelihood team:

- Village Tiger Response Team (VTRT); (49 teams comprising 344 members)
- Tiger Victims/Tiger Widow; (341 victims)
- Resource Collectors; (6983 BLC holders from FD)
- Community Patrol Group (CPG)
- Person Involved in Illegal Activities

f. Final Beneficiary Pool

Sl. No.	Category	Total HHs	Range Coverage	Remarks
1	VTRT	325	4	Without Geographical Consideration
2	Tiger Victims	25	Satkhira	List from Khulna office and LEADERS (NGO)
3	Resource Collectors	505	4	Provided by Divisional Forest Office, Khulna and Bagerhat
4	CPGs	186	4	List from FD as well as CREL
	Total	**1041**		

Note: About 1112 more beneficiaries who are the household members of above mentioned category.

6. Engaging Partners
Negotiations to partner with Hathay Bunano Proshikhan Society (HBPS) to leverage a collaborative approach to improve the livelihoods of select beneficiaries near the Sundarbans periphery were in the final stage in 2015 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed in this regard in January 2016.

The goal of this collaboration is to increase livelihood opportunities for select beneficiaries near to Sundarbans Reserved Forests and the establishment of long-term financial relationship between beneficiary producers and Hathay Bunano ps. Under this collaboration, around 500 selected women beneficiaries will be involved through the cost-share mechanism for AIG activities. About BDT 2,769,000 from the partner side and BDT 4,500,000 from Bagh project will be contributed to this livelihood intervention.

4 Institutional Capacity and Training (ICT)

The Institutional Capacity and Training Team (Team ICT) works with different components in the range offices and regional office of Bagh for various ICT engagements. Team ICT works at three levels---capturing results of the capacity development interventions for TraiNet and other internal database (minimal), providing support for module creation, materials development and capacity development interventions logistics management (moderate), and developing knowledge materials for capacity development interventions, and/or facilitating/co-facilitating such interventions, and providing direct support with time for executing the interventions' plan (intense).

The Team not only organizes trainings but also organizes and helps organize various institutional development and capacity development activities including capacity gap assessment, conference, consultation session, on-the-job training, online training, curriculum & material development, exposure visit, TNA, TOT, training, workshop, seminar, FGD, organizational analysis, organizational strengthening, institutional analysis, sustainability initiative for the Project. Trainings managed by Team ICT are broadly of two types: training for external beneficiaries and training for internal beneficiaries. The indicator # 7 of Bagh M&E plan tracks the "Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance."

Participants at the International Boot camp on Study Design and Data Analysis

Indicator # 7 of Bagh M&E plan takes into account the person-hours spent by the external beneficiaries throughout the lifetime of Bagh. Of the total targeted person hours, year 2 constitutes the biggest chunk of the target with component # 3 contributing almost 65% to the total target. In year 2 of Bagh, the target of training person-hours was 15,240. The target could not be achieved as the total training person-hours totaled 6,829 in year 2. There were 3 main reasons for less than 50% achievement against the target:

1. The number of person-hours in trainings was inflated by inclusion of workshop person-hours, which was later decided that workshop-hours would not be included in the person-hour in training
2. Nepal earthquake caused postponement of an important exposure visit to Chitwan, Nepal. This intervention would have added almost a 1,000 hours to the achievement column of training person-hours.
3. Very few training interventions were conducted for the external beneficiaries during quarter # 2 of Bagh's year 2.

Although only half the target of year 2 was achieved, Team ICT was heavily engaged in managing more than 20 interventions such as training, consultation session, and workshop throughout 2015.

The external beneficiaries as trainees attended a total of 10 training interventions. Only 3 training had participation from women beneficiaries.

Of the total 6,829 person-hours of training in year 2 that was accounted for Bagh's indicator # 7, only 280 person-hours came from women participants. More than 95% of the total
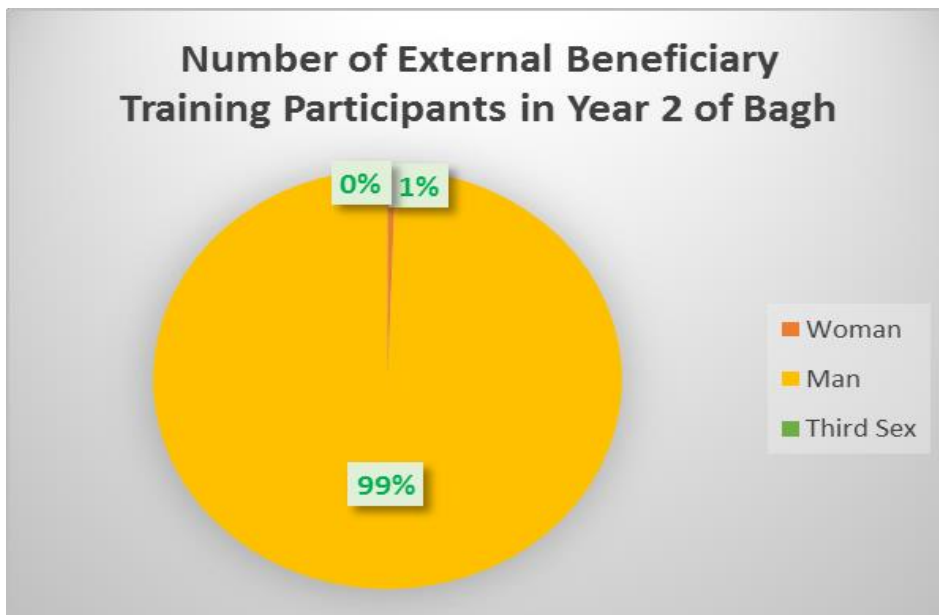
achievement came from men participants. There was no participation from third-gender individuals in the trainings. Of the 689 external beneficiaries at the trainings, only 4 were women. These statistics underpins the importance of gender balance in future training interventions.

Team ICT also is also responsible for updating the Bagh's account at the TraiNet system with data on trainings attended by external beneficiaries given that the expenditure for those events is made from Bagh's fund. All relevant training data of year 2 were updated in the TraiNet.

5 Bagh Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

1. Bagh M&E Plan

The Bagh M&E plan got the approval from USAID Bangladesh on 9 May 2015 after a thorough review carried out by experts. The M&E team worked with other component members, partners, USAID, ACME & management to draft the M&E Plan.

2. Project Performance Data Collection Tools

After the approval of Bagh M&E Plan, the team started executing the plan in the field through data collection. The tools were developed with the consensus of ACME and component members to craft effective data collection tools. After the development of the tools, the team undertook a training event in Khulna to train the project staff on data collection and received necessary feedback to improve the tools.

3. Consensus Building Workshop on Bagh M&E Plan

The M&E team has organized a workshop in Dhaka on 26 April 2015 with Component leads, senior officials of Bagh Activity, ACME, USAID and BCAS to build consensus on the Bagh M&E Plan and set the targets. The component leads worked together and analyzed each others' targets. The draft targets were later finalized.

Participants at the Consensus Building Workshop on Bagh M&E Plan

4. Training on Monitoring & Evaluation

Bagh M&E team arranged a training on Monitoring & Evaluation on June 7-8 2015 in Khulna to share the Bagh M&E plan, data collection tools, and accepted feedback to improve the tools further. All the Bagh staff from Dhaka and Khulna participated in the training.

5. Knowledge & Attitude Survey
Bagh M&E conducted the Knowledge & Attitude Survey through a third party on November 21-24, 2015. The survey result will be used to set up the baseline of Bagh M&E Plan Indicator 4 and 5.

6. Socio- economic and Conservation Knowledge Baseline Survey
A baseline survey on socio- economic and conservation knowledge is essential to understand the current knowledge level of the community near Sundarbans so that the project could identify the scope of knowledge level after completion of the Project. BCAS conducted the survey ob behalf of Bagh on 12-18 December 2015.

7. Data entry, Analysis and Report Generation
Project performance data for quarter 1-4 of year 2 has been captured, entered into database, analyzed to prepare a report, which was shared with the management, component leads and other partners.

8. Data Quality Assessment
The M&E team conducted two internal data quality assessments in August and December 2015 to assess the quality of data. As part of the assessment, the M&E team prepared internal data quality checklist, discussed with communities, visited the range and regional offices to verify the sources of data. Followed by the first internal data quality assessment, USAID's ACME conducted the first external data quality assessment of USAID's Bagh Activity. The ACME team conducted a DQA at Bagh office in Dhaka on 16 August 2015 and another DQA at two ranges and regional offices on 16-18 September 2015.

9. Develop Online Database 'BaghTracks'
The team initiated the process in September 2015 to develop an online database titled 'BaghTracks' to facilitate more effective data storage, documentation, analysis, reporting, and progress tracking for USAID's Bagh Activity. UY Systems Ltd was selected as the consultant agency to develop the system. Several meetings, discussions and demonstration sessions took place among the Bagh team, UY Systems Ltd and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) to come up with the final draft of the database. The database will be launched in March/April 2016.

10. Regular Field Visits to Monitor Data Collection Performance
Since the approval of Bagh M&E Plan and implementation of the performance data collection tools, the team visited the range offices and regional offices at least once a month to follow-up the process of data collection, quality control of data and validation. On-spot/ on-the-job training was also provided when necessary to reduce the skills gap.

6   Targets and Results at a glance (Jan-Dec 2015)

SPS reference (f)/custom #	Title	Unit	Baseline	2015 Target (Jan-Dec'15)	2015 Result (Jan-Dec'15)	LoP Target	Cumulative Result (Jan-Dec'15)
Custom 1	**Relative abundance of tigers in target habitat**	Tiger track set/km (Khal survey)	TBD	-	-	-	-
		Density: number of tiger/ 100 square km (Camera trap)	TBD	-	-	-	-
Custom 2	**Relative abundance of tiger prey species in target habitat**	Tiger prey track set/km (Khal survey)	TBD	-	-	-	-
		Index of tiger prey pictures obtained by Camera-traps at a sampling grid.	TBD	-	-	-	-
Standards & F4.8.2-28	**Number of laws, policies, strategies, plans, or regulations addressing climate change (mitigation or adaptation) and/or biodiversity conservation officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance**	Number	0	2	2	6	2
Custom 3	**Percentage of individuals with increased knowledge in community groups on wildlife conservation**	Percentage	31.6%	10%	-	30%	-
Custom 4	**Percentage of individuals with improved attitude in community groups on wildlife conservation**	Percentage	28.3%	10%	-	30%	-
Custom 5	**Number of individual activities conducted by community groups (VTRTs, Baghbondhu) for wildlife conservation**	Number	1300	1300	979	4200	979
Standards & F4.8.1-29	**Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported**	Number	0	15240	6829	55560	6829

SPS reference (f)/custom #	Title	Unit	Baseline	2015 Target (Jan-Dec'15)	2015 Result (Jan-Dec'15)	LoP Target	Cumulative Result (Jan-Dec'15)
	by USG assistance						
Custom 6	**Number of priority research studies conducted for better understanding of Sundarbans ecosystem**	Number	0	-	5	10	5
Custom 7	**Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management**	Hectares	0	17875	68348	71500	68348
Custom 8	**Number of joint community patrolling groups functioning**	Number	0	0	0	6	0
Custom 9	**Number of SMART patrols conducted inside forest**	Number	0	6	12	30	12
Custom 10	**Number of forest resource collectors applying safety measures**	Number	0	300	364	1000	364
Custom 11	**Percentage of human-wildlife conflict incidences effectively managed**	Percentage	60%	65%	69%	80%	69%
Standards & F4.8.1-6	**Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance**	Number	0	-	-	2400	-
Custom 12	**Number of people in a target group (e.g. forest resource collectors) who have adopted eco-friendly AIG schemes**	Number	0	-	-	600	-
Custom 13	**Amount of investment in eco-friendly AIG schemes through PPPs under Bagh**	USD	0	-	-	70000	-

7   Learning and Challenges

During the second year, Bagh learned the importance of ensuring that its administrative structure has a sound foundation. The high rate of turn over of Chief of Parties is not conducive to continuity in leadership. The most important lesson is to ensure that foreign staff has adequate support in country, especially with regard to their legal status. In future, processing for non-Bangladeshi nationals' A-3 visas should commence well prior to their arrival in country.

It is imperative too that Bagh closely coordinate its work with the Forest Department. Relations with the Forest Department, while at times challenging, must be professional and transparent. Documentation and regular meetings are key to good communication. In the 3rd year, the CoP will hold monthly meetings with the Project Director on the second Monday of every month.

8   Annexes

8.1   Annex I: List of deliverables

- Bagh Gender Approach, February 2015
- Patrolling Operation Plan, May 2015
- Bangladesh Conflict Tiger Management Guidelines (Draft), July 2015
- Bagh Branding and Marking Plan, August 2015
- Communication Strategy, August 2015
- Bagh Livelihoods Approach, August 2015
- Policy on Gender Equity, November 2015
- Policy on Sexual Harassment, November 2015
- Project Management Manual, December 2015
- Financial Policies & Procedures Manual, March 2015
- Procurement Manual, March 2015

8.2   Annex II: Bagh Activity Performance Progress (Jan – Dec 2015) by disaggregation

8.3   Annex III: M&E Report on Bagh Performance Progress (Jan-Dec 2015)

9   Appendix

9.1 Appendix I: Photo stories

Commitment phase of the 'Mother-like Sundarbans Campaign' inaugurated

The commitment phase styled, 'We shall protect the Sundarbans' under the local level campaign titled'/ Mother-like Sundarbans' was inaugurated on 18 October 2015 in Khulna.

The objective of the inauguration ceremony was to sensitize and update the stakeholders, implementing partners; donors and media partners about the community campaign progress & upcoming activities. The Vice Chancellor (VC) of Khulna University (KU) Professor Dr Mohammad Fayekuzzaman joined the ceremony as the Chief Guest. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of community involvement and increasing community awareness for an effective tiger conservation program in Bangladesh. The Conservator of Forest (CF), Khulna Circle Dr. Sunil Kumar Kundu presided over the inauguration.

Under the Commitment Campaign, Bagh is going to arrange brand ambassador ceremony, campaign for men and women, campaign for school children, boat exhibition etc from 15 October 2015 to 28 February 2016. The campaign will start with 18 Brand Ambassador Ceremony from 25 October 2015 in 22 wards in the periphery of the Sundarbans. It will continue till the end of April 2016. A total of 219 events and activities will be organized with men, women and school children that will engage an expected 300,000 local people with the campaign activities.

The Khulna University VC is addressing the inauguration of 'Mother-like Sundarbans Campaign'

Bagh arranges Community Dialogue to raise awareness of Tiger Conservation in Sundarbans

USAID's Bagh Activity organizes a series of informal meetings with community groups (men and women) in a village forum setting to raise community awareness on the importance of conservation of the tiger and the Sundarbans.

Under the Project, the village forum initiative started its monthly courtyard community dialogue in January 2015. Approximately 20 people participate in every meeting to discuss issues related to conservation in their local context. This 2-hour discussion session is a platform for the local people to learn and share their thoughts and experiences. In just four short months, a total of 35 village forum meetings have been held: 18 with men and 17 with women. A total of 430 women and 357 men actively participated in these meetings. The village forums also cover related issues such as the Wildlife Act, the tiger victim compensation policy, human-tiger conflict management, forest resource collection regulations and other conservation issues.

The locally selected tiger ambassadors (Baghbondhus) affectionately lead the village forum. There are 80 Baghbondhus in four ranges of the Sundarbans.

Local women in the Sundarbans periphery participating in a community dialog on protecting tigers and the Sundarbans

Global Tiger Day observed in Khulna

The Global Tiger Day was observed in Khulna on 29 July 2015 aimed at building public awareness on the importance of saving the remaining population of the majestic big cat from extinction.

The Forest Department, with support from USAID's Bagh Activity and other non-government organizations, jointly organized different programs in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts that included a rally, commemoration, discussion session, cultural programs and other events. Forest Division Sundarbans Circle and Khulna District Administration jointly observed the day in a befitting manner.

On the occasion in Khulna city, they brought out a colorful procession led by the Administrator of Khulna District that paraded different points of the city. A commemoration was held at the auditorium of Khulna Officers' Club with Dr. Sunil Kumar Kundu, Conservator of Forests of the Khulna Circle, in the chair. The Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University Prof. Dr. Fayequzzaman attended the discussion as the Chief Guest.

A colorful rally marking the Global Tiger Day 2015 in Khulna city on 29 July 2015

International Boot Camp on Wildlife Study Design & Data Analysis in Bangladesh

Capacity building in wildlife and conservation research is a priority mandate of USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity (Bagh). To implement this, Bagh has planned several short training programs that will be implemented in the duration of the project.

A 10-day 'Boot Camp on Wildlife Study Design & Data Analysis' was organized by the USAID's Bagh Activity with assistance from the Biodiversity Conservation Society Sarawak (BCSS), Malaysia in Khulna from 23 August to 03 September 2015. This was the first international training event of its kind in Bangladesh. The 10-day boot camp was intended for those involved in wildlife research using techniques such as presence/absence surveys and mark-recapture study design and data analysis. The boot camp was formally inaugurated by Mr. Zahir Uddin Ahmed, the Project Director (PD) of USAID's Bagh Activity as well as the Conservator of Forests, Khulna Circle on 22 August 2015.

USAID's Bagh Activity Project Director (PD) Mr. Zahir Uddin Ahmed addressing the participants during the opening ceremony of the Boot Camp

A total of 21 participants attended the boot camp including 8 participants from the research component under Bagh. There were 13 external participants, including four foreign participants from Bhutan, India, and Nepal, 2 participants from FD, and remaining 7 participants were from different academy, NGO, and independent wildlife research bodies.

USAID's Bagh Activity Target vs Result January-December 2015

SPS reference (f)/custom #	Title	Unit	Baseline	2015 Target (Jan-Dec'15)	2015 Result (Jan-Dec'15)	LoP Target	Cumulative Result (Jan-Dec'15)
Custom 1	**Relative abundance of tigers in target habitat**	Tiger track set/km (Khal survey)	TBD	-	-	-	-
		Density: number of tiger/ 100 square km (Camera trap)	TBD	-	-	-	-
Custom 2	**Relative abundance of tiger prey species in target habitat**	Tiger prey track set/km (Khal survey)	TBD	-	-	-	-
		Index of tiger prey pictures obtained by Camera-traps at a sampling grid.	TBD	-	-	-	-
Standards & F4.8.2-28	**Number of laws, policies, strategies, plans, or regulations addressing climate change (mitigation or adaptation) and/or biodiversity conservation officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance**	Number	0	2	2	6	2
Custom 3	**Percentage of individuals with increased knowledge in community groups on wildlife conservation**	Percentage	31.6%	10%	-	30%	-
Custom 4	**Percentage of individuals with improved attitude in community groups on wildlife conservation**	Percentage	28.3%	10%	-	30%	-
Custom 5	**Number of individual activities conducted by**	Number	1300	1300	979	4200	979

SPS reference (f)/custom #	Title	Unit	Baseline	2015 Target (Jan-Dec'15)	2015 Result (Jan-Dec'15)	LoP Target	Cumulative Result (Jan-Dec'15)
	community groups (VTRTs, Baghbondhu) for wildlife conservation						
Standards & F4.8.1-29	Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance	Number	0	15240	6829	55560	6829
Custom 6	Number of priority research studies conducted for better understanding of Sundarbans ecosystem	Number	0	-	5	10	5
Custom 7	Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management	Hectres	0	17875	68348	71500	68348
Custom 8	Number of joint community patrolling groups functioning	Number	0	0	0	6	0
Custom 9	Number of SMART patrols conducted inside forest	Number	0	6	12	30	12
Custom 10	Number of forest resource collectors applying safety measures	Number	0	300	364	1000	364
Custom 11	Percentage of human-wildlife conflict incidences effectively managed	Percentage	60%	65%	69%	80%	69%
Standards & F4.8.1-6	Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance	Number	0	-	-	2400	-

SPS reference (f)/custom #	Title	Unit	Baseline	2015 Target (Jan-Dec'15)	2015 Result (Jan-Dec'15)	LoP Target	Cumulative Result (Jan-Dec'15)
Custom 12	**Number of people in a target group (e.g. forest resource collectors) who have adopted eco-friendly AIG schemes**	Number	0	-	-	600	-
Custom 13	**Amount of investment in eco-friendly AIG schemes through PPPs under Bagh**	USD	0	-	-	70000	-

Note: "-"data were not collected due to the implementation not started/maturity.

USAID'S Bagh Activity Performance Progress (January – December 2015) by disaggregation

Standard Indicators

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
F4.8.2-28	Number of laws, policies, strategies, plans, or regulations addressing climate change (mitigation or adaptation) and/or biodiversity conservation officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance	**Number**	-	**2**
	Category			
	Laws			
	Policies			
	Acts			
	Conventions			
	Strategies			1
	Plans			1
	Regulations			
	Agreement			
	Protocols			
	Guidelines			
	Stages			
	Analyzed			1
	Drafted			
	Proposed			
	Accepted			
	Implemented			1
F4.8.1-29	Number of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance	**Number**	**15240**	**6829**
	Gender			
	Men			6549
	Women			280
	Third Sex			
	Group			
	Forest Department			2421
	CMOs			
	VTRTs			299
	Forest Resource Collectors			3165
	Civil Society			
	Students			
	Teachers			272
	Researchers			672
F4.8.1-6	Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance	**Number**	-	-
	Gender			

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
	Men			
	Women			
	Third Sex			

Custom Indicators

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
Custom 1	Relative abundance of tigers in target habitat	**Tiger track set/km (Khal survey)**	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Sanctuary			
	Sundarbans East			
	Sundarbans West			
	Sundarbans South			
		Number of Tiger/100 Sq Km (camera trap)	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Sanctuary			
	Sundarbans East			
	Sundarbans West			
	Sundarbans South			
Custom 2	Relative abundance of tiger prey species in target habitat	**Tiger prey track set/km (Khal survey)**	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Sanctuary			

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
	Sundarbans East			
	Sundarbans West			
	Sundarbans South			
		Index of tiger prey pictures	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Sanctuary			
	Sundarbans East			
	Sundarbans West			
	Sundarbans South			
Custom 3	Percentage of individuals with increased knowledge in community groups on wildlife	**Percentage**	-	-
	Gender			
	Men			
	Women			
	Third Sex			
	Group			
	VTRT			
	BaghBondhu			
	FRC			
	Others			
Custom 4	Percentage of individuals with improved attitude in community groups on wildlife conservation	**Percentage**	-	-
	Gender			
	Men			
	Women			
	Third Sex			
	Group			
	VTRT			
	BaghBondhu			
	FRC			
	Others			
Custom 5	Number of individual activities conducted by community groups (VTRTs, Baghbondhu) for wildlife conservation	**Number**	1300	979
	Group			
	VTRT			608
	BaghBondhu			371
	Type of activities			
	Social meeting			673
	Wildlife rescue operation			24
	Commitment session			119
	News			18

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
	Personal consultation			
	Village forum			**116**
	Other			**29**
Custom 6	Number of priority research studies conducted for better understanding of Sundarbans ecosystem	**Number**	**0**	**5**
	Category			
	Threat assessment			2
	Wildlife and habitat monitoring			3
	Social Research			
	Stages			
	Planning			1
	Data collecting			3
	Analyzing			1
	drafting			
	Final reporting			
Custom 7	Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management	**Hectares**	**17875**	**68348**
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			**68348**
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Stages			
	New			**68348**
	Continue			
Custom 8	Number of joint community patrolling groups functioning	**Number**	0	0
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
Custom 9	Number of SMART patrols conducted inside forest	**Number**	**6**	**12**
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			**12**
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
Custom 10	Number of forest resource collectors applying safety measures	**Number**	300	364
	RC groups			
	Honey collectors			100
	Fish/ shrimp fry collectors			
	Fish collectors			190
	Crab collectors			74
	Golpata collectors			
	Wood/fire wood collectors			

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
	Genders			
	Men			364
	Women			
	Third Sex			
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			128
	Sharankhola			76
	Khulna			89
	Chandpai			71
	Stages			
	New			364
	Continue			
Custom 11	Percentage of human-wildlife conflict incidences effectively managed	**Percentage**	**70%**	**69%**
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			100
	Sharankhola			96
	Khulna			100
	Chandpai			44
	Type of wildlife conflict			
	Tiger			100
	Snake			100
	Wild boar			19
	Crocodile			100
	Deer			100
	Monkey			100
	Jungle Monitor			100
	Dolphin			100
	Wildcat			100
	Fishing cat			25
	Wild fox			50
	Bird			
Custom 12	Number of people in a target group (e.g. forest resource collectors) who have adopted eco-friendly AIG schemes	**Number**	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Gender			
	Men			
	Women			
	Third Sex			
	FRC Category			

Ref.	Indicator & Disaggregation	Unit	2015 Target	2015 Result
	Honey collectors			
	Fish/shrimp fry collectors			
	Crab collectors			
	Wood/goalpata collectors			
Custom 13	Amount of investment in eco-friendly AIG schemes through PPPs under Bagh	**USD**	-	-
	Ranges			
	Satkhira			
	Sharankhola			
	Khulna			
	Chandpai			
	Gender			
	Men			
	Women			
	Third Sex			
	AIG Category			